**Kindness Perspective from Different faiths**

**Kindness from Catholic Perspective**

222. Consumerist individualism has led to great injustice. Other persons come to be viewed simply as obstacles to our own serene existence; we end up treating them as annoyances and we become increasingly aggressive. This is even more the case in times of crisis, catastrophe and hardship, when we are tempted to think in terms of the old saying, “every man for himself”. Yet even then, we can choose to cultivate kindness. Those who do so become stars shining in the midst of darkness.

223. Saint Paul describes kindness as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (*Gal*5:22). He uses the Greek word *chrestótes*, which describes an attitude that is gentle, pleasant and supportive, not rude or coarse. Individuals who possess this quality help make other people’s lives more bearable, especially by sharing the weight of their problems, needs and fears. This way of treating others can take different forms: an act of kindness, a concern not to offend by word or deed, a readiness to alleviate their burdens. It involves “speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement” and not “words that demean, sadden, anger or show scorn”.[[208]](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html#_ftn208)

224. Kindness frees us from the cruelty that at times infects human relationships, from the anxiety that prevents us from thinking of others, from the frantic flurry of activity that forgets that others also have a right to be happy. Often nowadays we find neither the time nor the energy to stop and be kind to others, to say “excuse me”, “pardon me”, “thank you”. Yet every now and then, miraculously, a kind person appears and is willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference. If we make a daily effort to do exactly this, we can create a healthy social atmosphere in which misunderstandings can be overcome and conflict forestalled. Kindness ought to be cultivated; it is no superficial bourgeois virtue. Precisely because it entails esteem and respect for others, once kindness becomes a culture within society it transforms lifestyles, relationships and the ways ideas are discussed and compared. Kindness facilitates the quest for consensus; it opens new paths where hostility and conflict would burn all bridges.

Source: [Fratelli tutti (3 October 2020) | Francis (vatican.va)](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html)

**Kindness from Greek Orthodox Perspective**

“The most expensive liquid in the world is a tear. It is 1% water and 99% feelings. Think before you hurt someone.”

-Anonymous

I read this quote and thought I would start with it so we are reminded of kindness. Kindness begins with a smile and is the beginning of being present, contributing where we can, being grateful, being merciful, being gentle, overlooking the offense, sharing our talents, standing up for the weak, volunteering, saying yes when you could otherwise say no, and not to judge others too soon, volunteering our time, and not just our treasure.

Because everything we do today, affects our tomorrow, what we allow ourselves to think, say, do or not do, has tremendous bearing on how our life unfolds. We need to carry out random acts of kindness without the expectation of reward. So if we want to live a life of kindness, love, compassion, and empathy, we must challenge any behavior that isn’t loving and kind.

Let us be the individuals in this life to set the example with our kindness and goodness. Let us inspire those around us to follow in our example to help transform their lives and be sensitive to the needs of others.

To quote Mark Twain, "Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

**Kindness from Indigenous Perspective**

Kindness- Kindness in Indigenous American Native Spirituality is mostly understood as being respectful and honoring all our earthly relatives, two leggeds, four leggeds, creepy crawlers, winged, finned, standing People (plants and trees), and insects that reside on planet Earth (Indigenous Sacred Temple ) ….

RESPECT

Respect is politeness, and care shown toward someone or something that is considered important. In Indigenous American Native Spirituality, the inhabitors of planet Earth, believe that all of creation has purpose, and that each creation has value.

HONOR

Honor is the ability to combine all Indigenous American Native Spirituality Values (Faith, Humility, Charity, Respect, Honor, Forgiveness and Gratitude) into our relationships with those who travel the road with us, and to those who created and travelled the road of life before us.

**Kindness from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Perspective**

Being kind to others is a tenant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Here are two quotes from men we sustain as latter-day Apostles.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin was truly a kind man. Said he:

“Kindness is the essence of a celestial life. Kindness is how a Christlike person treats others. Kindness should permeate all of our words and actions at work, at school, at church, and especially in our homes.

“Jesus, our Savior, was the epitome of kindness and compassion.”

Elder Dallin Oaks said this:

We should all follow the gospel teachings to love our neighbor and avoid contention. Followers of Christ should be examples of civility. We should love all people, be good listeners, and show concern for their sincere beliefs. Though we may disagree, we should not be disagreeable. Our stands and communications on controversial topics should not be contentious.

…The Father’s plan of salvation, which we know by prophetic revelation,… includes loving our neighbors of different cultures and beliefs as He has loved us.

**Kindness from Hinduism Perspective**

Hinduism addresses kindness at many levels starting with the vedic culture of ancient times to recent practical approaches that incorporate various lifestyles and practices.

*Shama* the Sanskrit word is about the importance of being able to forgive a lapse; this is the first step of a kindly act.

*Karuna* or compassion is acceptance with a degree of understanding differences in others; a certain degree of pity and being gracious is the nature of the all-encompassing divinity.

*Daya* is the other shade of understanding kindness. It morphs forgiveness and compassion into an action to do something for others.

Such acts of kindness are part of being a Hindu, the Dharma or lifestyle of being a Hindu. Being kind is the ultimate Dharma or act to enfold and accept all living creatures as one.

Hinduism does not force anyone into boundaries of rules but explains the repercussions and consequence, while encouraging to celebrate and accept the omnipotent, omnipresent divinity in its myriad forms. Dharma of being Kind is completely entwined in this.

**Kindness from Judaism Perspective**

Kindness is a major principle of Judaism. It is often represented by the word "Chesed." Chesed is often interpreted as "loving-kindness." This can be interpreted as something more than average kindness. To some, Chesed - loving kindness, can be seen as an attribute of the Divine that is a key attribute in the creation of the world. It is also considered as one of the key sephirot - emanation characteristics of the Divine flow and how the Divine is revealed to people. That is how important it is.

In Exodus 34:6-7, it is clear that Chesed is a major attribute of the Holy One - one of the 13 attributes, often recited as part of the High Holiday liturgy. And it is stated that the Holy One has an abundance of Chesed. This Chesed of the Divine, is also a major factor in forgiveness and mercy. In considering acts of kindness, one should engage in forgiveness and mercy.

It is also stated in the Talmud that the Torah - the "Five Books of Moses" begins and ends with kindness. In Genesis (Bereishit), the Holy One is kind to Adam and Eve by providing clothing. (To some this is construed as clothing made of "light" as there would be no animal skins in heaven.) And the Torah ends with a very high level of kindness - the appropriate burial of Moses.

Why is a burial of a higher level of kindness than the provision of clothing to a live person? A live person can say thank you, maybe even send a thank you card or other acknowledgement. Providing kindness to people, including charity, which is beyond any sense of being thanked, is at an even higher level.

Kindness and charity are related. And charity, Tzedakah, is one of the three "pillars" of Judaism. And once again, providing charity anonymously is a very high level. Also, as written by Maimonides, charity which helps a person to not need charity in the future, is a very high level (i.e. helping someone gain a particular skill).

There is much more that can be written about this. And various Jewish leaders and Jewish people will have different ways of interpreting and discerning it. However, the importance of kindness in the Jewish faith is abundantly clear.

Respectfully submitted, Rabbi Alan Scott Bachman

**Kindness from Baha’i perspective**

“Put into practice the Teaching of Bahá’u’lláh, that of kindness to all nations. Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, ***let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path.”***

“O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this: ***Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart***, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.”

“We acknowledge him as a God of kindness, justice and mercy. Why then should we, His children and followers, war and fight, bringing sorrow and grief into the hearts of each other? God is loving and merciful. His intention in religion has ever been the bond of unity and affinity between humankind.”

“O ye beloved of the Lord! In this sacred Dispensation, conflict and contention are in no wise permitted. Every aggressor deprives himself of God’s grace. ***It is incumbent upon everyone to show the utmost love, rectitude of conduct, straightforwardness and sincere kindliness unto all the peoples and kindreds of the world***, be they friends or strangers. So intense must be the spirit of love and loving-kindness, that the stranger may find himself a friend, the enemy a true brother, no difference whatsoever existing between them. For universality is of God and all limitations earthly. Thus man must strive that his reality may manifest virtues and perfections, the light whereof may shine upon everyone. The light of the sun shineth upon all the world and the merciful showers of Divine Providence fall upon all peoples. The vivifying breeze reviveth every living creature and all beings endued with life obtain their share and portion at His heavenly board. In like manner, the affections and loving-kindness of the servants of the One True God must be bountifully and universally extended to all mankind. Regarding this, restrictions and limitations are in no wise permitted

“O ye friends of God! **Ye must not only have kind and merciful feelings for mankind, but ye should also exercise the utmost kindness towards every living creature.** The physical sensibilities and instincts are common to animal and man. Man is, however, negligent of this reality and imagines that sensibility is peculiar to mankind, therefore he practices cruelty to the animal. In reality what difference is there in physical sensations! Sensibility is the same whether you harm man or animal: there is no difference. Nay, rather, cruelty to the animal is more painful because man has a tongue and he sighs, complains and groans when he receives an injury and complains to the government and the government protects him from cruelty; but the poor animal cannot speak, it can neither show its suffering nor is it able to appeal to the government. If it is harmed a thousand times by man it is not able to defend itself in words nor can it seek justice or retaliate. Therefore one must be very considerate towards animals and show greater kindness to them than to man. **Educate the children in their infancy in such a way that they may become exceedingly kind and merciful to the animals**. If an animal is sick they should endeavor to cure it; if it is hungry, they should feed it; if it is thirsty, they should satisfy its thirst; if it is tired, they should give it rest."

**“The Kingdom of God is founded upon equity and justice, and also upon mercy, compassion, and kindness to every living soul.”**

*(Bold and italics have been added to highlight the word kindness in the preceding quotes. There are many more instances where kindness and the action of kindness are written of in Baha’i Scripture. The basic Baha’i belief of the oneness of Mankind, oneness of God, and the oneness of Religion make the concept of kindness foundational. It is my understanding, that with this simple concept of approaching all our actions with the attribute of kindness and compassion, the world would be a transformed. We would truly be living in God’s Kingdom on earth. May it be so.) JBS*

**Kindness from Sikh Perspective**

The three virtues of Sikhism are honest living, sharing with others and focusing on God. Our Gurus have emphasized to live a disciplined life. By following the three virtues

a Sikh practices kindness in the form of caring and sharing with fellow human beings. Sikhism believes in One God and equality among people. The sikhs provide selfless service to others in many forms in day to day life. One is expected to help any person in

need irrespective of religion, caste or color.

A person cannot be spiritual without being kind. All religious people irrespective of what faith they

believe in, believe in the fact that God shows kindness to all.The following are quotes (translated to English) from The Guru Grath Sahib which show how kindness is important.

SGGS Page 51

Practice truth, contentment and kindness; this is the most

excellent way of life. One who is so blessed by the Formless Lord God renounces selfishness, and becomes the dust of all**.**

SGGS Page 272

The God-conscious being shows kindness to all. No evil comes

from the God-conscious being.

The basics of Sikhi teaches a person to be humble and be equal to others. By doing “Sewa” (service)

to others and through “Vand Chakna” (sharing) one is drawn towards kindness and honest living.

During prayers all sikhs pray for everyone’s well being (Sarbat da bhala). All the Gurudwara’s have

an open kitchen like a soup kitchen (langar) where anyone can come and eat. People work together to provide service to people without judgment. Sikhs believe that it's God's will to serve others without any reason or expectation.

One of the verses from The Guru Granth Sahib Ji summarizes how the Guru expects the Sikhs to be kind to all:

Do not utter even a single harsh word; your True Lord and Master abides in all.

Do not break anyone's heart; these are all priceless jewels. ||129||

**Kindness from Family Federation for World Peace and Unification perpective:**

“Living for the sake of others.”

It is like our motto. The parents live for the sake of each other; the parents live for the sake of the children; children live for the sake of their parents (filial piety) and children (brothers and sisters) live for the sake of each other, which expands out into society, nation and the world.

**Kindness from Islam Perspective:**

Kindness -- such a simple, yet such a powerful word. In Islam, kindness is a very important part of a Muslim’s expression of faith. One of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was, “The believers, in their love, mercy, and kindness to one another are like a body: if any part of it is ill, the whole body shares its sleeplessness and fever.” Islam teaches Muslims to be kind to all of God's creations, including their parents, relatives, neighbors, animals and the environment.

from the Prophet’s time describes an instance when a thirsty man went down a well for water. When he came back out, he saw a panting dog eating mud to quench its thirst. The man said, “This dog is feeling the same thirst that I felt.” So, he went down into the well again, filled his shoe with water, climbed back up and gave the dog water. Allah forgave this man of his sins for this act of compassion and kindness. In Islam, hunting birds and animals for pleasure or sport is not allowed. Hunting is only allowed as a means of sustenance. Similarly, Islam prohibits the cutting or destruction of trees and plants that yield fruit, unless there is an absolute need for it.

In the Quran, Allah ordains for Muslims to do good to “neighbors who are near” and “neighbors who are strangers.” The Prophet said, “He is not a believer who eats his fill when his neighbor beside him is hungry" and "whose neighbors are not safe from his injurious conduct." He also said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Day of Judgment should do good to his neighbor."

**Kindness from Episcopalian Perspective**

Kindness is one of the greatest commandments that Christ taught us. In Mark 12:31, Jesus says that we should love our neighbors as we love ourselves. That starts with kindness, even in the small everyday interactions with strangers – our neighbors, in Jesus’ eyes.

Respectfully submitted by Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable board of directory.

Zeynep Kariparduc

Chairwoman